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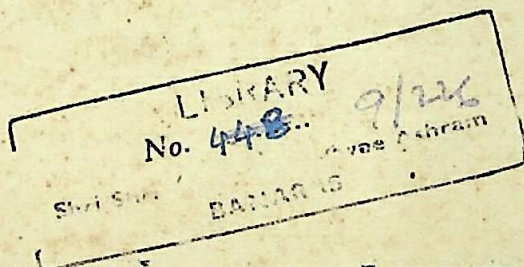
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PRESENTED

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE AND OTHER TALKS



T. L. VASWANI

EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE AND OTHER TALKS

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IMPORTANT

Kindly note that this is a Double Number for the two months,—September and October, 1972.

Our next issue will be the "Annual Birthday Number" and will be out on 1st November, 1972.

—The Manager

MESSAGES AND BLESSINGS

I have received this week "Garland of Letters." I really enjoy it very much. I have read it twice already. What beautiful and interesting letters !

Also, every day I read Dadaji's " The Bhagavad Gita : The Song of Life," and I feel he is alive and near, when I read any of his books.

I hope I live long, so that I can enjoy many more of his writings. I feel happy and at peace when I read any of his works.

(Mrs.) Marie A. All
U. S. A.

Your magazine is a light-house for me. It gives courage to go ahead with the journey.

S. K. Soni
Hyderabad

I cannot afford to miss your *East and West Series*, which are so wonderful, illuminating and interesting.

K. Sen
Hoogly

The magazine is a tremendous inspiration and I am very grateful for the link with you all who serve to bring this knowledge and understanding to so many people,

Nola Greig
New Zealand

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FOREWORD*

The following pages embody the full text of my Convocation Address, delivered at the Gurukul University (Vishva Vidyalaya), in 1928, and some other talks.

India's children, I humbly submit, must know themselves,—must have a memory of what India has thought and felt and endeavoured to achieve at certain periods in her history. In a profound sense, as Plato and Indian sages have taught, knowledge is memory.

Indian literature, philosophies and religions reflect the ideals of ancient India. But our schools and colleges and universities do little to develop the culture-consciousness of India. I have heard several youngmen tell me:—"But these stories and songs and thought-systems of the past,—are not, many of them, myths of a dreamland?" Many of the striking incidents in the lives of the great heroes of our history are regarded, I know, by not a few of those who would follow critical, historical methods, as fictitious. I would ask youngmen to remember that the truth of poetry or imagination has a value as great as, if not greater than, the truth of facts.

What some critics would reject as "dreamland" has been a part of the life of the great millions of India. The "dreamland" enshrines India's witness through the ages. It must not be forgotten that India's culture, as reflected in Indian literature

* Written in 1928.

and art and religion, is a reflection of India's life and civilisation.

I believe in the value of Indian ideals for the modern world. There is a muddle somewhere in our modern life,—something wrong with our civilisation. "Light, more light!" said Goethe on his death-bed. And each expiring generation has cried the pathetic cry:—"Light, more light!" The continuous accumulation of materials in modern science, philosophy and sociology has but disclosed the fact that great problems of thought, conduct and life remain unsolved. And I am one of those who believe that the "Light, more light," the larger Light we need, will travel again from the ancient pathways of the East. Indian ideals can do much to help the modern world.

India must gather her inner strength to achieve her true freedom. So taught her ancient Sages. And their word I fain would pass on to the young. Not in the clamour and shouts of crowds, not in passion and strife, not in the fear and flattery of men who know not their deeper selves may appear. She whom we worship as the Goddess of Freedom. Silent and radiant she shines in the hearts and minds of those who are strong in the power to suffer and to live.

We talk of Bharata. That sacred word has many meanings in the ancient books. One of them I may refer to here. Bharata is a name given to Saraswati; Saraswati is the Goddess of Knowledge. And knowledge is freedom. For with knowledge comes self-reliance. If young men would but know India,—her genius, her culture, her ideals! It were well for us of India to remember something

of our past and appreciate the values of Aryan civilisation. I plead in these pages for a right understanding of the spirit of Indian culture and the soul of Indian civilisation.

It is painfully true that the current system of education has not helped us to recognise and appreciate Indian culture. Several of those who pass University examinations think of the jobs they might have rather than of the values of nation-service. Industrial culture of the West interests many, as well it may. But how many are interested, also, in Indian culture, or realise how much it may enrich the thought and life of the world? And Indian culture related itself to a refined type of civilisation.

In one of his books, the Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, develops a theory of life in terms of "self" and "anti-self." It may not be untrue to facts, I think, to speak of "self" and "other-self" : and these should, in the life of individuals and nations, be interlinked with each other. India's self is culture realised in and through religion, morality, art, literature : her other-self is civilisation realised in and through politics, science, agriculture, industry. India was great in the long ago when she realised the unity of these two,—culture and civilisation. India fell in the day when many of her men of culture developed a theory of asceticism, and separating themselves from life stood outside the movement of civilisation, leaving the country to its sad fate. How to secure an effective union of culture and civilisation is, to my mind, the real problem before us.

Freedom in the West, has been confounded with

greatness. True freedom is the way of service. To that nation belongs freedom which serves civilisation, serves humanity. Power and friction, power and violence go together. Change the motive of power into one of service, and you will solve the problem of freedom.

I send out this booklet with a silent aspiration that the essential message of our ancient culture may enter into the heart of the nation's youth for the highest service of the nation! It is the message of a new creative life, a new *shakti* re-building India into a nation of the truly strong, a nation of the truly free. These pages plead for a creative culture of *shakti* and, therefore, sound a note against imitation. All imitation is emasculation. India must be Herself!

T. L. VASWANI

THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CULTURE*

I am happy to be with you on this occasion. It is the first Convocation of the Gurukul University on the new site. And in inviting me to give the Convocation Address, you have done me an honour for which I am deeply grateful.

The Gurukul is one of the greatest gifts of modern India to education. The Gurukul idea was first clearly conceived in our days by Rishi Dayanand. My homage to him! A *bal-brahmachari*, a spiritual son of the ancient Rishis, he was more than a "reformer" : he was a *tapasvi*, a *yogi*. His intellect,—how keen! Dayanand's other name, methinks, was Vidyanand. He rejoiced in *vidya* (knowledge). His heart,—how full of love for India! He was eager to see her re-arise in the strength of the Ancient Wisdom to teach again the nations of East and West. The son of a wealthy merchant, he became a *fakir* for the sake of India. He realised that ignorance was the root of all evils.

Has not ignorance,—educated ignorance, if you will,—produced the mental slavery of modern India? Political freedom is but an outer expression of the inner freedom of mind and heart : and the truth is being realised that education is an essential factor in the creation of a new nation. Rishi Dayanand dreamt the dream of an India becoming great again through the power of an education inspired by the ideals which made India

*Being the Convocation Address delivered by Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani), at the Gurukul University, 1928.

great and vital in the long ago.

This dream of Rishi Dayanand was turned into a deed by Swami Sharadhanand. Homage to him, the great builder of this Gurukul! I love to think of him as a nation-builder. The most influential factor in nation-building is education. Its aims and inspirations and ideals must express, not suppress, the genius of the nation.

Current education in this country is a transplanted system. It is an imitation,—a bad imitation. And imitation is emasculation. In a period of India's low vitality was the current system imposed upon her. It had its origin in France in the days of Napoleon. It was imposed on India by England. It was essentially bureaucratic, aiming at "efficiency" of a foreign Government, not setting free the powers of the people. The object was to train cheap clerks and little officials to help the British administration. Here, then, is the tragedy of the present system : it is not organic. It is cut off from the soul of the people. It is disintegrating : it separates the mind from race-memories. Truly has Śrī Krishna declared in the Gita :—"From the breaking of memory results wreck of understanding, and from wreck of understanding a man is lost."

This Gurukul stands as a shining witness to some of the great race-memories of this ancient, gifted land. Therefore is this Gurukul destined, I believe, to play a significant part in the evolution of a new Indian renaissance which is essential to the rebuilding of a new Indian nation. For never let it be forgotten that a nation is a psychic entity and is brought into being by ideas and ideals transmitted by the race-consciousness and the

environment. They are the true architects of a nation.

There are certain features of this Gurukul University which impress me much as having vital value for India and the world.

(1) The Gurukul pleads for a new study of the ancient Aryan culture. The renaissance of Greek and Roman cultures blended with the culture of the early Christian Church laid the foundation of modern civilisation in Europe. This civilisation lies exhausted, today. "There are," wrote Romain Rolland, "a certain number of us in Europe for whom the civilisation of Europe no longer suffices." And another great thinker, one of the very greatest thinkers of the modern West, Count Keyserling, wrote:—"Europe does not stimulate me any longer." A new renaissance of Sanskrit-Buddhist-Arabian cultures, blended with the new scientific consciousness of the age will, I believe, help in enlarging the basis of modern life and building a new civilisation for which the world is waiting,—a civilisation of synthesis and brotherliness and broad humanism.

In current education, some experiences of the West in the domains of literature, history, economics and politics, are sought to be super-imposed on the Indian student without any idea of relating them to his own experiences. It is forgotten that experience is the rule in education, as in other spheres of life. The Gurukul type emphasizes India's own experiences, Indian ideals, Indian traditions. Tradition has a narrowing influence when it is the ally of prejudice and superstition. But tradition is a stimulus and inspiration, when it expresses

a great ideal and indicates great achievements of a great people. I believe in the educative value of India's traditions. From them, current education isolates the student. He must be linked with the living past, and a memory awakened within him of the heroes and sages of this ancient, gifted nation.

(2) The Gurukul stands for a vitalising ideal in education. Current education moves in an atmosphere of repression. The Gurukul aims at blending freedom with discipline. Between the two there is an intimate connection. Disciplined liberty grows out of sympathy and trust. These were given by the Gurus to students in the *ashramas* of old. These the Gurus of this Gurukul give to their pupils, thus setting a noble example to so many of the teachers in modern India who, in the name of discipline, deny sympathy and trust to the students and so make education a machine and schools no better than prison-houses.

In the Gurukul, students live together as the Guru's family. Education is fellowship. This truth is emphasised by the Gurukul. In the Veda, we read that the Guru is one who takes his pupil "into his womb"! A pregnant thought, this! The teacher is not a task-master. The teacher is he who guards and guides his pupil with the wisdom and love of the father-mother consciousness. The teacher is not merely an instructor : the teacher is, essentially, an inspirer. The Gurukul does not split up life into artificial sections. The Gurukul takes charge of the whole life of the student,—of his whole endowment and evolution, physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, spiritual. The Gurukul is a wonderful attempt at uniting the school

and the home.

(3) The Gurukul makes Hindi the language of instruction. The current system of education, which makes English the medium, is, to say the least, unpsychological. The right educational principle, as I understand it, is to proceed from the known to the unknown. Far be it for me to decry the English language. The language of Milton and Shakespeare, of Shelley and Bernard Shaw, of Bacon and Burke, is rich in treasures of thought and experience. The English language links us with the world. The English language brings us in touch with the modern science and political, social and cultural life of the West. But all these advantages may be secured without making English the medium of instruction. Study English as a second language, but do not surrender the supremacy of Hindi as *Arya-bhasha*.

The determination of the Gurukul to make Hindi the medium of instruction is destined, I believe, to bring about a mighty revolution in Indian education and Indian life. When the Germans sat heavy on the life of Poland, they realised that one of the ways to denationalise Poland was to make German the medium of instruction in Polish schools. So the Polish language was ostracised, and Polish boys were beaten and wounded by savage school-masters for reciting prayers in Polish.

Language is intimately connected with the thought and life of a people. Make a foreign language the language of instruction and you paralyse the very thought-processes of the conscious and sub-conscious : you encourage imita-

tion of alien ideas and customs which make for the mental and moral passivity of a people. Not without reason did the ministry in the Free Irish State make Gaelic the vernacular of Ireland. And leaders of the new Jewish renaissance regard it essential to make the Hebrew language the language of instruction in elementary, secondary, and high schools,—as having a cultural and spiritual value.

(4) The Gurukul emphasises the value of *brahmacharya*. It is the soul of Hindu civilisation. The dominating civilisations suffer from luxury-loving materialism, from *bhoga* (sense-indulgence). Hindu culture recognises the truth that self-restraint is an important principle of a truly dynamic progressive civilisation. Very suggestive, to my mind, is the meaning of the ancient word, *brahmacharya*. Many of the ancient Sanskrit words are wonderfully beautiful and open up, to my mind, vistas of thought and experience. Look into the root meaning of the word, *brahmacharya*. *Brahmacharya* means "moving with Brahman." Now Brahman is radically connected with the word "to grow." Brahman is the Spirit of growth, the Spirit of evolution. May I not say Brahman is the Creative Spirit of *Shakti*? A fragment of that Eternal *Shakti* is in you, youngmen! Do you co-operate with it? Or do you dissipate it in *bhoga*, waste it in pursuits of pleasure and selfish ends?

The basis, at once of culture and character, is *brahmacharya*. It is the basis, also, of nation-building : for it is the secret of *shakti*. *Brahmacharya* does more for health than all the drugs of doctors. Purity builds up powers of manhood.

The soul of Hindu society and Hindu civilisation was *brahmacharya*. This soul have we insulted, and India lies prostrate. I believe profoundly that the problem of India is the problem of making new minds and new manhood. A nation that would be truly free must needs be a nation of the strong.

Current education, it is unfortunately too true, has ignored the value of *brahmacharya*. Are we surprised to find that our schools and colleges send out, at best, clever men, when India needs simple, strong men filled with the one passion of being spent in the service of India and her great ideals? One thing let me say,—India's hope is not in imitation of Western ways and Western cults. India's hope is in bands of *brahmacharins* who would go, from place to place, and give to waiting multitudes the message of the Rishis.

(5) This Gurukul, in its pursuit of studies at once in Sanskrit and modern subjects, is inspired, I believe, by the ideal of self-knowledge and self-reverence. Current education has put our heads in fever. The fever is imitation. And all imitation is weakness. What is needed, in every sphere of thought and life, is *shakti*, strength. And the secret of strength is:—"Be yourselves!"

The era of Vedic civilisation,—how far back it stretches in history! A recent critic says, the Vedic era may well be calculated at a period of 20 or 25 thousand years ago. And the more I study the Vedic era, the more am I impressed with its simplicity of living. In simplicity is the true strength of a civilisation. In simplicity and spirituality, the Vedic age was in advance of the modern.

It was the simplicity of a refined civilisation. It was the spirituality of a natural and nature-loving people.

We talk of democracy : that of the Vedic age, I humbly submit, was of a noble type. The raja (king) was elected by the people. The elective principle was, I believe, of the essence of the Aryan theory of kingship. Popular will was recognised and respected. Republics were not unknown to India. And above the raja or the head of the state was the *dharma*. Vedic democracy was based on the truth of self-discipline and self-reverence.

Today, the emphasis is on cleverness, on mere mind. Clever men are plenty as the betel leaves! The Aryan emphasis was on the Soul, the *Atman*. The mind may help in the scramble for money or success. But the Soul achieves. The soul, the *Atman*, builds what endures. Make the *Atman*, the Spirit, the organising principle of your studies and life. It is the Spirit that will make India truly a nation of the free. And if the Indian movement tramples upon the spiritual, it must fail of its larger purpose. For the national, which is not a vehicle of the *Atman*, becomes a force only on the side of pride and passion, hate and strife. The peril of these days is,—subordination of the *Atman* to the expedient, of the eternal to the mechanical, of the claims of the Spirit to the clamour of an aggressive, power-intoxicated civilisation.

Let it be your endeavour to bear witness to the Wisdom of the Rishis, the Wisdom of the Spirit. The competitions and complexities of modern life tend to make keener and keener the craving for response to the outer. It is all the more

necessary, therefore, to awake the sense of an inner world. Current education has failed, because it has done so little to develop consciousness of the inner values of life.

There passed away recently, in Germany, one of her greatest sons. He was a mighty thinker : he was a great industrialist : he was an able administrator. I refer to Rathenau. In one of his books, he wrote:—"Cultivate the soul!" It is the ancient teaching of the Rishis re-worded in a modern tongue. And the one question I would ask of the great schools and colleges, the great universities and Governments, alike in East and West, is:—"What are you doing to cultivate the souls of your students, the souls of your pupils?" For I believe profoundly that out of the soul are the issues of life.

Education, says Newman, is a high word. What it is, and what are the ideals and functions of a university, are questions to which many answers have been given. Almost every answer, I think, has its significance. In English secondary education, the emphasis is on gentlemanly manners. "Manners maketh man." In France, the emphasis is on logical, discriminating, disciplined mind. In Rome, the emphasis was on the ideal and practice of law as a principle of social order. In ancient Greece, the emphasis was on the spirit of inquiry, the spirit of "sweetness and light." A recent writer, Prof. Ward, emphasises moral vigour and moral worth. Education, he argues, is training of character.

The universities in modern India send out, year after year, "Bachelors of Arts," who are neither "bachelors" nor versed in "arts"! A better

degree was the one conferred in Ancient Athens : the graduates were named, "Men of Athens." The degree of "manhood," indeed, is worth having. But, I confess, some of the noblest ideals of education and functions of the university are suggested, to my mind, by the two ancient Sanskrit words,—Saraswati and *snataka*! All Gurukulas, all *Ashramas*, all *Vishva-vidyalayas*, all *Pathshalas*, all *Vidyapiths*, all platforms of knowledge, all centres of culture, are sacred to Saraswati : they are her shrines. And unlike the Athena of ancient Greece, Saraswati is represented as simple,—not regal, but poor, decked with flowers, not gems—not gaudy, but gentle, simple and pure, simple and lily-white, poised on a white lotus and carrying in her hand the mystic *vina*. The lotus is, in Hindu art, a symbol of the Infinite. Is not Brahma named Padma-Ja, "born of the lotus"? The lotus, too, is associated, in the ancient books, with the science of *yoga*. In an Upanishad, the *yogi* is asked to sit in meditation like a lotus. Education must awaken a sense of the Infinite. And the very crown of all sciences is the science of *yoga*. The man of knowledge, too, should, like Saraswati, be simple, and like her draw music of the *vina* of *vidya*, the music of service. For the purpose of knowledge is not self-aggrandisement, but *seva*,—not the hoarding of silver and gold, but the scattering of what one has and is in the service of humanity.

No less significant, to my mind, is the ancient word, *snataka*. It means to me much more than what is conveyed by the familiar word, "graduate." A *snataka* means, literally, one who has bathed, one who has gone through the process of puri-

fication. Knowledge is more than experience. That high-souled thinker of England, J. S. Mill, following the life of the brilliant Scotch philosopher Hume, resolved mind into a stream of sensations. I humbly submit that a school or college should be a stream of purification. Three classes of *snatakas* are referred to in the ancient books, (1) *Vidya-snatakas*, (2) *Vrata-snatakas*, and (3) *Vidyavrata-snatakas*. But every *snataka* is to bear witness to the supreme ideal of purity.

Among the duties of students in the Gurukulas and *ashramas* of old was daily bath. It had its value, as a good hygienic rule. It had its value, also, as a symbol of bath in the stream of purifying knowledge. Every teacher was to be a man of purifying influence. Indeed, one of the several meanings of the word "Guru" is "the purifier." The Guru was one who had the power to create a protective, purifying atmosphere around his pupils. Clever men, brilliant, successful,—many such has India, today. She needs more purifying personalities.

Materialisation of the intellect, worship of power, organisation at the expense of spiritual idealism, cult of ambition and cleverness cannot help India. India will rise again through the purifying power of *tapasya*, the power of the life of the Spirit. Today, we think, largely, of a teacher's academic qualifications. In ancient India, they thought, also, of his psychic spiritual influence. One of the instructions to the teacher, as we may read in the pages of Patanjali, was that he must commence teaching after sitting for some time with sacred grass in his hand at a pure moment with his face turned

towards the East,—the realm of light and purity. Education must begin with a purifying personality : the teacher must be a man both intellectually and spiritually alive. The *acharya* (teacher) must be a person not of superficial manuals but of idealism and *shakti*, not a machine to grind graduates but a living fountain of the purifying, healing waters of knowledge. This truth was realised by the ancient Rishis. This truth is rediscovered, reaffirmed by Gentile,—the gifted philosopher who is, also, the Minister of Education in Italy.

On taking charge of his pupils, the Guru in ancient India said:—"I commit thee to the Wind and Water, to Light and Rain." A beautiful and suggestive saying! For wind and water, light and rain represent, to my mind, four great forms or agencies of the Spirit that purifies life. A *snataka* is one who has been purified by bath in the sacred Sindhu of knowledge.

Four distinct centres of life must be thus purified. They are the (1) physical, (2) mental or intellectual, (3) imaginative-emotional, and (4) moving-practical centres. He who would purify his mental centre must develop reverence for knowledge. This reverence has suffered much since the spread of a wrong utilitarian conception of culture. Prof. Richet of France raises the question "What is civilisation?" And he answers thus:—"What, then, is civilisation? I am not going to say, as did some humorist, that it is measured by the quantity of soap and postage stamps used per inhabitant. This picturesque definition is inadequate, and I would rather sum up what appears to me to be

the principal element of civilisation by saying that it is *knowledge*."

Yes,—civilisation is knowledge of the *shakti* or the forces around us and within us. The modern man studies the forces which surround him, but takes little note of the *inner* forces, the *shakti* of the Spirit. He does not purify his mental centre. What is the result? Scholarship is, again and again, used for selfish ends, and science for destruction rather than reconstruction of the human life. Such knowledge is indeed a power, but a curse.

In ancient time, they studied and meditated in *ashramas* and *gurukulas* to purify their mental bodies and so to make them vehicles of higher reason. When Megasthenes visited India, about 300 B. C., he saw some Aryan students spending, each one, over a generation in pursuit of knowledge.

A suggestive little story is told us in the books,—a story which is to me more than a story. Bharadvaja spent three successive lives as a student. Then said Indra to him:—"If I give thee a fourth life, what wilt thou do with it?"

And Bharadvaja said:—"The fourth life, too, I shall dedicate to knowledge."

Indra said to him:—"In three lives you have studied three Vedas : in your fourth life, study the Universal Science."

Yes,—profound love of truth, the Universal, is the crown of culture. It is the guru's privilege to develop this love and help the student to realise that he is a servant of truth,—a servant of the Universal. Alas! knowledge in our schools and colleges, today, is often proud. For it is knowledge sundered from vision. Knowledge, in ancient India,

was enriched by reverence.

One of the great tasks of this great Gurukul should be to hand on through its *snatakas* the torch of ancient culture to tens and hundreds of thousands. For, still from the Ancient emanates a light which may illuminate India and the world. Alien was Macaulay's mind to the genius of India : else he would not have said that the whole library of oriental literature was not worth a single shelf of occidental culture. Macaulay had prodigious memory but a coarse texture of mind. He sacrificed accuracy to his love for the emphatic. He could coin phrases : he could not understand the genius of India. His rhetoric carried the day, and a system was imposed upon this country cutting off its education from the true culture of India.

This culture is a world of study. Not many, even among the educated Indians, realise what influence Sanskrit literature exerted upon the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century, in Germany and England. Not many know that new and new manuscripts are being discovered even now, indicating the influence of Sanskrit upon remote regions of the earth. Recently Doctor Andrews led the Central Asiatic Expedition in the Gobi Desert in Mangolia. Dr. Andrews has arrived at the conclusion that primitive human beings at various periods during the Stone Age inhabited the Gobi Desert and were lake-shore and river-shore dwellers and wandered over a wide area. And in the Gobi Desert he has discovered buried treasures of Sanskrit literature.

A recent view is that the Dards, east of Afghanis-

tan, are an Aryan remnant. We are even told that there was an Aryan emigration in Baktria. How many among the Hindus realise the significance of the discovery that Slavs, Greeks, Italians, Celts, Tuetons and Scandinavians are six Aryan stocks of Europe? How many know that Aryan culture even penetrated into Kohistan and Chinese Turkistan? How many know that India had developed democratic forms of Government? Read the three ancient books on Indian polity, *viz.*, *Nitisara* of Shukracharya, *Kama Kundak* and the *Artha-shastra* of Kautilia. Even in the Vedic age, there were the two great assemblies, the Samiti and the Sabha. The Samiti was the assembly of the whole people. It elected the king. Its president, called Pati, presided over its deliberations. The Sabha was a Council of Elders: it was the national Judicature. The Samiti had the power even to depose a king. And yet there are critics who say that democracy is alien to Indian consciousness!

Not military conquests but the light of culture was India's glory in all the great periods of her history. The Vedic age was vital. The Rishis held high the torch of the Immortal Truth:—"Lead me from darkness into Light." The Epic age was great. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* reflect civilisations full of refinement, adventure and freedom. The age of Buddha was pre-eminently one of freedom of mind. The Sutra period saw the development of systems of philosophy, but they were not regarded as rivals. There are no rivalries in the realm of knowledge. The six systems were six *darshanas*, six view-points of the One Reality that is Nameless, Endless, Ever-Full, Infinite in

its expressions. The philosophic period was one of great *acharayas*,—the greatest of them being Shri Shankara, whom I regard as the greatest mind that has, so far, appeared in the evolution of humanity.

These were great periods in India's history,—great because rich in creative activity of culture. What wonderful universities sprang up ! The University of Takshasila (Taxilla) in N. W. India, the native land of Panini, was famous for scholars who were also *tapasvins*. The Greeks, who accompanied Alexander to India, were deeply impressed with the beautiful simplicity and doctrines of Indian teachers.

Great were the Universities of Taxilla, Benaras and Nadia. Vidaha, Panchala, Madradesha were famous as centres of culture in the age of the Upanishads. The Nalanda university, built on grounds bought by five hundred merchants for ten lakhs of gold pieces, was beautified by translucent ponds which bore blue lotuses intermingled with deep-red kanaka flowers, and gave education to ten thousand students.

What rich culture was evolved in those truly vital periods ! Hindu culture had a *shakti*-element, a driving force. It found its way to Alexandria and deeply influenced the Neo-Platonists and the later philosophical development of the West. Ashoka's missions were not of theology but culture. They influenced the thought and life of Syria and Egypt. Chandragupta, who assimilated much of Alexander's matchless military skill, sent ships to Siam, Java and the East Indies : and you may still see there ruins of Indian architecture. It was a wonderful civilisation India evolved at its

maturity,—a civilisation at once intellectual and athletic, at once aesthetic and spiritual. The India of that time,—the very spring-time of civilisation,—is to me the Holy Land of History!

Some memory of that India I ask you, *snatakas* of the Gurukula University, to take with you in your hearts, and pass on its message to the waiting multitudes. The great historian, the monumental Stubbs, develops a thesis that the roots of the present lie deep in the past. And none may hope to understand actual India nor help in building a new and a mighty nation without some understanding and appreciation of India's vision in her age of light, in the long ago.

I plead for a new study of the ancient past, a new criticism of the ancient traditions. They will reveal the mind of India,—indeed, the mind of all mankind. For India was the cradle of humanity. I plead for a new critique of the Veda. It has a national value: the Veda has an international value in a far deeper sense. The Veda is an important source for the study of evolution of the life of mankind. I plead for a new scientific study of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* : they are a clue to types of civilisation. I plead for a new study and appreciation of Buddhist-Jain thought : it has been a world-force.

Alas! the ancient culture is to most of us, today, an empty phrase or but a body of dead memories entombed in books. I ask you, graduates of the Gurukul University, to study the ancient culture, not as dead documents of a dead past, but as ways of living, having a value for the present and future and a message for the reconstruction of a new India,

a new civilisation.

The physical and emotional-imaginative centres, too, must be purified. The theory concerning the purification of these centres is the doctrine of *brahmacharya*. It is the very essence of the ancient philosophy of education.

Brahmacharya must not be confounded with asceticism. The ancient scriptures recognised the hygienic value of cheerfulness. Manu asks the teachers not to awaken fear among their pupils. Fear checks the flow of blood, fear may even poison blood : laughter accelerates circulation. *Brahmacharya* is reverence for the Creative *Shakti*. *Brahmacharya* is control of energy. *Brahmacharya* is regulation of Life-force. The medieval mystic of the Christian Church, Jacob Boehme, saw the secret of the life of *brahmacharya* when he wrote:—"The art of living is to harness fiery energies to the service of the Light." And Saint Paul expressed the truth of *brahmacharya* in the language of a mystic when he said:—"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living* sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

"*Brahmacharya*," says an ancient text, "is supreme pilgrimage." In another text we read:—"The pilgrimage of all pilgrimage is purity of heart." A continental doctor, Antonino Pais, announces that he has discovered a new system of rejuvenation by X-rays. The ancient Rishis discovered the science of rejuvenation by *brahmacharya*. It is the life-ray of man. "Be hard," said Nietzsche. The Gurukul student is asked to train himself in a school of hardness. Hindu society

suffers, today, from the sin of softness. Love is not softness. There is no true love without *shakti* and self-control. Life is not a "soft job" and the spirit that will save society and the nation is the spirit of the athlete. *Brahmacharya* is spiritual athleticism.

Brahmacharya was the basis of social life in ancient India. Child-marriage was unknown. The present disgraceful spectacle of student-husbands and baby-wives was unknown. Not the least service of this Gurukul is its persistent and practical campaign against the evil of early marriage, which is largely responsible for the heavy infantile mortality of India.

To strengthen the spirit of *brahmacharya*, a system of *yama* and *niyama* was taught to the student. It trained the soul-life through purification of nerves and senses, and the rhythmic system expressing itself in the flow of breath and blood, and the metabolic system expressed in limbs and organ of digestion.

Precise rules were prescribed as to dress and diet, exercise and daily conduct. Simple was to be the *brahmachari's* dress consisting of a cover for the upper part of his body and a *dhoti*, made of hemp-flax or wool, for the lower part. Simple was to be his diet. He was to refrain from meat. What poisonous materials we put into our stomachs in the name of civilisation! And what an illusion we nourish in thinking that vegetarian diet is for the weak! We forget that vegetarianism has produced a number of athletic champions, some of them record-breakers in running, cycling, wrestling, weight-lifting, swimming and mountain-

climbing.

The Gita classifies foods as *satvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic* : and *satvic* foods are defined as "foods which foster vitality, life, strength, health." The *rajasic* foods are described as "*tikshina*," and the word may be interpreted to mean "stimulating." The *brahmachari* was asked to avoid all stimulants. Spirituous liquors were forbidden. *Satvic* food was recommended : it is rich in vitamins. It includes whole-meal wheat, bread, dal, vegetable, ghee, butter, milk. All these contain those wonderful organic substances which we call vitamins and which are essential to nutrition.

The *brahmachari* was asked to eschew luxury, dancing, opium, tobacco and intoxicants as being devitalising. Here is a modern testimony taken from an authoritative book named, *How to Live*, by Prof. Fisher and Dr. Fisk:—"Among the poisons which must be kept out of the body should be mentioned the habit-forming drugs such as opium, morphine, cocaine, alcohol. The best thing for those who wish to attain mental efficiency is total abstinence from all such substances including spirits, wine, beer, tobacco . . . even coffee and tea."

The rhythmic system must be purified. Hence, the value of *pranayama* and sun-baths. The West is beginning to appreciate them, today. A solarium has been started in England. Many believe, today, in the sun-cure: and the importance of *surya shakti* or solar force is being increasingly recognized. The Gurukulas and *ashramas* were open-air institutes situated on river-banks or in the midst of forests. The symbol of Western civilisation is the crowded city : that of India is nature. In

fellowship with her is health,—physical, mental and spiritual.

Nor must the *brahmachari* forget the value of play. Both body and mind develop their powers through play. Sri Rama was a great athlete. Archery was a favourite game. Let it be revived. It is at once athletic and aesthetic : it promotes grace : it calls for coolness of judgment : it helps in overcoming nervousness : it is an aid to concentration.

Archery and other Indian games, wrestling, running and *lathi* play, *pranayama*, *asanas*, and *yogic* exercises will help much in training the rhythmic system and the metabolic system. They will help, too, in re-building national life. A Physical Culture Renaissance is needed. Body-building is nation-building. And, I believe, our victories will be won not in councils, not on platforms, but in new *shakti ashramas*, in institutes of physical culture and *tapasya*.

The more I study, the more I find that the basis of educational life in ancient India was *brahmacharya*. And who, if not *brahmacharins* and *tapasvins*, will be the guardians of the Indian nation, through the conflicts of the coming days,—the guardians of the Holy Temple of the Mother?

In the ancient Gurukulas, students stayed for twelve years, some for thirty-two years, some even for forty-five years. Students collected alms, reared cattle, brought fuel from the forest, served the Guru in a variety of ways, maintained the sacred fire and studied the books including the *Aranyakas*,—the “forest”-science of mystical life.

Then came the time to leave the Gurukul for

the greater Gurukul of life. The student completed his studies; he was to return to his home as a *snataka*: and to him the Guru gave his blessing and his parting message. And to you, *Snatakas* of this Gurukul University, I can give no nobler message than ancient one of the Rishis. It is the message of the Dedicated Life. On the completion of the *brahmachari*'s period of studies, the Guru said to him:—

Speak the truth :

Do thy dharma :

Study the Vedas :

And break not the thread of thy race !

Truth always, no matter if people blame you. Truth always, no matter if you become unpopular. When did truth-lovers tread the path of popularity? Truth always, no matter if you must walk the way covered with the flames. The universe, rightly represented by Goethe as "the garment of God," is woven with the thread of truth. And ye that are young and eager to serve, never forget that a new Indian nation must be built in truth, not patch-work and policy. Jesus the Blessed said:—"Truth shall make you free."

Every *snataka* returning home and desirous of entering the *grahstha ashrama*,—the life of the householder,—was asked by the Guru to strive for prosperity. The householder must be above want. He needs money for himself and others : he must not despise it. A simple, spiritual civilisation does not mean poverty. The Hindu philosophy recognises the value of wealth. It is the duty of a householder, also, to help in the increase of national

wealth. Material prosperity is a factor at once in national well-being and the spiritual unfolding of national life.

"Not for the school, but for life," is a well known maxim of education in the West. Education must be related to life,—the life of the individual, the the life of the community, the life of the nation. "Do thy duty," I say to every *snataka*. Do thy duty to the nation. One great aim of every school and every college in India should be to help in building up a new Indian nation, a new Indian culture and a new Indian civilisation. Every Indian university should be the seed-bed of a simple, synthetic, spiritual Indian civilisation.

The *dharma* to the nation means, in no small measure, *dharma* to the village. I wish the *snatakas* and the students of the Gurukul University to go, from time to time, to the villages, to assist in village-work, to form village unions, and pass on knowledge to the poor. In ancient India, education was only given to those who promised to pass on knowledge in their turn to others. I also wish the Gurukul University to organise, from time to time, sports and national festivals on a big scale and invite the village-folk to participate in them. Do thy *dharma*! There is far too much emphasis on oral instruction and book-learning in our institutions : there is too little *doing*. It is time to remind ourselves of the ancient idea which blended knowledge with doing, knowledge with service, culture with labour.

The Veda is, to me, a symbol of Aryan civilisation. Of its value I have spoken already. It is our richest inheritance. It is a legacy too

sacred for conceit or self-satisfaction. It is a legacy we must use for the service of humanity. What a beautiful spirit breathes, for example, in the following aspiration of the Veda:—

*Wisdom at eve,
Wisdom in the morn,
Wisdom at noon,
Wisdom with the rays of the sun,
Wisdom with prayer,—
We plant in ourselves.*

And there is another note, too, sounded, again and again, in the Vedic *mantras*, the note of *shakti*. A beautiful Vedic prayer speaks of God as the "Sun of suns". Is not the sun a symbol of *shakti*? Is not *Shakti* the urgent need of India, today? Europe was, for centuries, behind India. Then came the day of Western domination. Europe came into possession of mechanical inventions of modern science, just when India was immersed in a Dark Age. Such an India was no match for the science-equipped West. India fell! She was wounded, largely, from within. Her healing is not in imitation of a Western cult. She needs to break her bonds created by custom and fear. For this she needs *shakti*. The Veda is a scripture of *shakti*.

And is there not another Veda, too? The Veda of Nature. This, too, must be studied. Hence the value of science. In the days of her greatness, India developed a number of sciences. A new scientific activity is needed. I would refer specially to the value of scientific agriculture and chemistry and technics. From them, studied and applied in an ethical spirit, will come, I humbly

submit, a solution of our pressing problem,—the problem of hunger.

One of the duties emphasised in the scriptures is named, "debt to the race." This duty is referred to in the following words in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* :—"Do not cut off the line of children." The *grahstha ashrama* must not be an excuse for *bhoga*. An *ashrama* is a sphere of discipline : and the *grahstha ashrama* must be regarded as a discipline to give the nation sons and daughters, who may grow to serve and strengthen the race. For this service we must build up the body. We must, as a scripture expresses it, "live in a pure neighbourhood." We are asked to have fellowship with nature, with the Great Cosmic Life : we are asked to be hospitable, to give alms, to be pure in thought and word, to do good deeds. And again and again, we are asked to develop strength. Listen to this Vedic prayer:—"May we see for a hundred years, live for a hundred years, hear, seek, be rich,—yea, more than hundred years!"

In this prayer, the Aryan race asks for unimpaired physical faculties and strong life. Our Aryan ancestors believed intensely in national health, in racial strength. What are we doing to improve the health and strength of the nation? India's need is a new gospel of *shakti*. Believe in the cult of man-hood,—I say to the *snatakas*. Be strong!

Strength is liberated through sacrifice. It was customary for the *brahmachari*, in ancient India, to go to his Guru with fuel in his hands. So was symbolised the beautiful truth that knowledge should pass into sacrifice. In every *ashrama*, in every Gurukul, was performed the beautiful

fire-ceremony. The message of fire is the message of sacrifice. The teacher, we read in an ancient book, must be a teacher of the science of sacrifice. And the prayer is uttered in the *Rig Veda* :—"O Agni! lead us along good paths to abundant life!" Never a nation but has had to tread the "good paths" of sacrifice to enter into life, abundant life.

The shield and the spear, the scholar's books, the merchant's wealth, the monarch's glory,—all, all pass away. What abides is the offering of loving sacrifice, the martyr's gift of himself, the *tapasya* and self-renunciation of dedicated life. For in sacrifice is poured part of the life of the Lord Himself. And where He gives a fragment of Himself, there bloom, with every drop of sacrifice, new flowers of blessing and beauty.

Snatakas of the Gurukul University, I ask you, in all humility, to dedicate your lives in loving service and sacrifice to India and the Eternal Vision of her life through the ages. Sons of the sages of the East, I ask you to be sons of *shakti*, sons of the flame! I ask you to bear witness to the vision of a new creative life through daily sacrifice. For it hath been declared in the ancient Books that in sacrifice did Brahma build the worlds. And in sacrifice, believe me, will be built a new and nobler nation,—an India such as may be greater and mightier than ever she was even in her ancient past.

GANDHI : A VOICE OF GOD*

When the news travelled to me in far-off Sind that the great-souled Gandhi had passed away, I said to myself:—"Be still, my heart! Be still and listen!" The very vacant space had become vocal. It said to me:—"There is no death to him who knows the meaning of death!" Death doth not touch Gandhi. For he hath known the meaning of death.

I am with you, this morning, to lay at the sacred memory a few flowers of my love. You speak of him as Mahatma Gandhi : you speak of him as the "Father of the Nation." And I know in other ways, too, have many spoken of this great one. May I tell you how in the heart within me I think of him? I love to call him, "Brother." Brother Gandhi! A brother is a burden-bearer. And Brother Gandhi has borne the burden of millions. In one of his books, he says:—"I would rather be torn to pieces than disown my brothers and sisters in suffering and pain!"

Brotherhood of man,—this is what we have forgotten. And so you find, today, peoples fighting one another, and nations, alike in East and West, still travailing along the path of violence and war. The great message of peace, of love, of fellowship, of brotherhood is the piteous need of all the nations. Is it not, also, our piteous need in this country?

*Being a talk delivered by Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) at Bombay, in 1949.

I moved out, the other day, to survey your great city, Bombay. We called it, in far-off Sind, Bombay the Beautiful. I stood in the midst of the tumults of your big city : and big tears stood in mine eyes. Why? I said to myself:—"Here, in your great and prosperous city of Bombay, are so many who sleep on the roadside at night, shivering in the cold of winter." And I said to myself:—"They sleep on the roadside : they, too, are my brothers and my sisters." Your people are my people! And then I recalled that in the last twelve months have travelled to Bombay so many of my people from Sind : so many whom you call "refugees" but whom you should love and call your "brothers." They, several lakhs of them, are homeless, shelterless. And I said to myself:—"My people are your people, as your people are my people!" This thought will grow in the measure in which we believe in the brotherhood of man. The teaching of brotherhood, Gandhi illumined in his sacrificial life.

I wonder if ever you asked yourself the question:—What is the meaning of the word, "Gandhi"? The word "Gandhi" means one who is "fragrant," and fragrance-filled is the life of Brother Gandhi. His fragrance lay just in this that he identified himself with the broken ones, with the neglected ones, with the indentured labourers, with the outcast,—the untouchables, the harijans,—with the poorest, the lowliest and the lost, with all those whom the world, intoxicated with power, tramples upon every day. Gandhi was a champion of the poor against oppression, injustice and insolence of might and power.

I salute Gandhi as a servant of the poor, as a brother of the poor, as a lover of the poor, as a devotee of the poor, ah! as a worshipper of the poor. The keynote to his wonderful life,—a life of heroic deeds, of heroic achievements, of heroic aspirations, of heroic attainments,—the secret of his life is his spirit of *seva*, the spirit of service and sacrifice.

Gandhi's has been a dedicated life,—a life dedicated to the service of the poor. This martyred man, adored by millions, gives us the *mantra* of sacrifice. This prophet of peace had to spend many years within the area of challenge and storm. But his life never failed to bear witness to that new freedom which is fellowship with the poor and oppressed.

Sometimes, when I think of Mahatma Gandhi, the figure of another great one rises before me,—the figure of Father Damien. Damien dedicated his life to the service of lepers, and he became a leper. Brother Gandhi dedicated his life to the service of the poor in India, and he became a *fakir* : he became a poor man. Father Damien, on one occasion, said:—"In the Kingdom of God there are no aliens!"

May I not say that in the Kingdom of Free India there should be no aliens? And yet, and yet, the thought has come to me painfully, again and again,—in this Free India I feel that I am an alien! Let us shake hands of fellowship and brotherhood, one with the other. Let us strive to understand the life and teaching of Brother Gandhi. He was a true brother : therefore, is he a Mahatma, a great soul. He was a true brother : therefore

is he become one of the shining lights of humanity. And the light of his life, the light of love, shall grow from more to more in the coming days. It seems to me that Gandhi is a Voice of God to the modern world. Say not Gandhi is dead! Gandhi is a Voice of God unto the nations of the world. And this morning, methinks, I heard Brother Gandhi say to me:—"Brothers are ye all!"

Hindus and Muslims, Parsis and Christians, Jains and Buddhists,—brothers are you all! Hindustan and Pakistan, brothers are you both! Brothers are ye! All the races of the earth are brothers. All the religions of the world are brothers. And these hands are given you to help, not to butcher : these hearts are given you to love, not to hate. Brain and science and machinery and civilisation and all your technical equipment are given you for the service of the poor and needy, the lowly and the lost, for the service of our broken, bewildered humanity.

LINCOLN : MAN OF THE AGES*

Have you stood by the beach and watched the waters and not received some suggestions from the sea? May we not think of some of the world's men as waves coming on us from the great sea of life? The vitality of a nation, I think, may be judged not so much by its mass-mind as by its power to throw up such men in the hours of its crises.

One of such men was Abraham Lincoln. How much he did for America is known to the student of history. The Gods placed in his hands a power which brought light into many dark homes and saved his people. He emancipated the negro, and suffered death for being true to his sense of brotherhood.

I have sometimes wished we had a People's Theatre in India to stage the lives of the world's heroes. Abraham Lincoln was a hero. A play by an English writer,—Mr. John Drinkwater,—dramatises his character and should appeal to young India. The play is named, "Abraham Lincoln." And I would have every one get a copy and read it. With a happy insight into Lincoln's character, the dramatist represents him to be a man of supreme courage. A character in the drama, Mr. Stone, a farmer, speaks of Lincoln as being "firm as a Sampson of the sport." Firm and fearless was Lincoln.

Not without reason does Manu make courage the basis of all virtues. And there is no greater

* From a talk.

miracle in the world than spiritual courage. It can push forward a whole people. It can move the very mountains. There is no conflict between the saint of God and the warrior for human rights. A true saint is a warrior, as the true warrior is a saint, knowing that in living for his brothers' rights, he only serves the God in man.

Lincoln is represented in the play as being fifty years of age, when a deputation of some citizens waits on him, requesting him to accept their invitation to become the Republican candidate for the office of President of the United States. Lincoln is not a place-hunter: he is not in quest of honour: he does not behave as so many small men do at the time of elections. Lincoln asks the deputation:—"Do you know my many disqualifications for this work?" And he proceeds to tell them that he lacks "graces," that he is a "very stubborn man," that if they choose him for the President's office, there would be "derision" in some quarters. Are they prepared to have him on his terms? What a noble contrast his attitude is to that of political opportunists and demagogues,—men who would exploit the emotions of the crowd for personal advancement!

Lincoln proceeds to say that if they elect him as President, they must look to him for no compromise in the matter of slavery. He is determined to abolish it, by constitutional means, if possible. "The determination," he says, "is in my blood!" And he relates to them an incident of the days of his boyhood. He was in New Orleans. He saw the poor negroes "chained and kicked as a man would kick a thieving dog." And he saw "a young girl

driven up and down the room for the bidder." And he said:—"If ever I get the chance, I'll hit hard."

Lincoln asks the deputation to reconsider the matter. He leaves them for sometime : he returns to find they are anxious to have him as the President. "I thank you, I accept," is the great man's quiet response to their affection. And when they leave him, he stands silently for sometime looking at a map of America, then kneels beside his table. What deep religious emotion is in that silence of Lincoln! That map is to him a symbol of his country : and he asks for strength from God to serve it in the days before him.

Opposition and intrigues assail Lincoln soon after he is elected President. The South is not willing to abolish the slave-trade. Lincoln is determined to abolish it. The South wants to secede. Lincoln will not tolerate this. He is for the Union : and he is prepared even for a civil war to maintain the Union and abolish slavery. Some of his political associates counsel compromise. Some call him stubborn : they would let the South have the slave trade, rather than declare civil war. But Lincoln stands firm and fearless. "The South," he says, "wants the stamp of national approval upon slavery. It can't have it." Civil war is declared. Fort Sumter is besieged by Anderson who leads the forces against the South. After some time, Lincoln receives a message from Anderson to the effect that the fort could be held three days, at the most, unless more men and provisions are sent. Lincoln calls his Council at this crisis. His comrades advise withdrawal of the forces. He

does not listen to these counsels of compromise. "We need," he says, "great courage, great faith." He sends reinforcements to Anderson.

The struggle continues for more than two dark years. He thinks of his countrymen dying in the struggle every day. Lincoln has a strong will but a tender heart. "Every morning," he says, "when I wake up and say to myself, a hundred or two hundred or a thousand of my countrymen will be killed today, I find it is startling." The war, he says, is an hourly bitterness to him. But he adds, "It must be endured.... We must act earnestly." Speaking of it to a lady, he says:—"I accepted this war with a sick heart, and I've a heart that is near to breaking every day. I accepted in the name of humanity and just and merciful dealing and the hope of love and charity on earth."

The war grows every day. He grows greater in resolution. He wins the War: the south is defeated. "I made the promise to myself,—and to my Maker," says Lincoln. He calls the Council. He tells them they "cannot escape history." He points out to them that "in giving freedom to the slave," they will "assure freedom to the free." He closes on the great note:—"We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last best hope on earth."

In 1860, he issues the great proclamation which grants emancipation to the negro. The negro has several disabilities still in America. The democracies of Europe and the United States are still colour-blind. Christ, the Brother of all, has not yet found a place in the councils of our statesmen. But Abraham Lincoln did what he could for the negro : it was a great achievement. Is it a wonder

the negroes called him, "Father Abraham," and looked up to him as their "great friend"?

The English dramatist represents a negro meeting Lincoln when the struggle with the South is over. And Lincoln says to him:—"For more than two years, I have thought of you every day. I have grown a weary man with thinking. But I shall not forget. I promise that." And the Negro says to him:—"You great, kind friend, I will love you!" Yet another says of Lincoln:—"He is a real white man." And this "real white man," this friend of the oppressed, is assassinated at the theatre. His love for the negro is counted a crime. He dies, and now, as Mr. Drinkwater says, "he belongs to the ages."

One wishes to know the political creed of such a man. When the Civil War is over, the question before him and his Council is how to punish the rebels. One of them says:—"We are fighting treason : we must meet it with severity." But Lincoln says :—"We will defeat treason : and I will meet it with conciliation!" "It is a policy of weakness," says a member of the Council. But Lincoln answers:—"It is a policy of faith,—it is a policy of compassion." There speaks a true statesman, a man who knows the psychology of human life.

There is a young soldier, William Scott, twenty years old. He had done a heavy march. He had volunteered for double guard to relieve a sick friend. He was found asleep at his post. His general says he has to be shot. Lincoln wishes to spare him. He calls William Scott to himself. The soldier relates his story, says he offered to relieve

a sick soldier who came from his place, and takes from his pocket his mother's photograph. Lincoln asks him if his mother knows about his being shot. "No," says Scott. "There, there, my boy," says Lincoln, "you are not going to be shot." The soldier cannot believe the good news. He breaks down, sobbing. Lincoln rises, goes to him and assures him of pardon. So concerning rebels in the Civil War, Lincoln follows a "policy of faith." "I will have nothing of hanging or shooting these men," he says, "even the worst of them."

Great was Lincoln's passion for liberty : but he realised that liberty cannot be realised without faith in the people. With that one faith, he saw the events, as they came before him in the great struggle to abolish slavery. He uttered that faith in memorable words:—"With malice toward none, with charity for all, it is for us to resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth!"

This faith has magnified the world's free nations. Where there is this faith, there is life. And a hopeful sign of today is that this faith in the people, faith in ourselves, is beginning to come back to us. Let it grow in the hearts of the young, let it grow into a vision of the future, into the courage that stands for right, the courage that fights and builds and reconciles, let it grow every day. And India will be justified of her children.

TORCH-BEARERS*

The sixteenth century saw the beginning of a new dawn, at once in India and in Europe. Most of the people were asleep. The night was dark : but the darkest night preceeds the dawn. In India, appeared Nanak and Kabir and, in Europe, St. Teresa of Spain and St. John of the Cross. All the four were among the shining lights of that age. The longing in them all was for "His Face Divine."

All these four great ones were prophets of the Inner Light. But the Light to which they bore witness in their lives and their teachings was not an illumination of the intellect,—the light of a cold, dry *gnana*, the abstract metaphysical light, the light of the bloodless philosophy. The Light, whose torch they bore aloft, was a burning flame,—the consuming Fire which destroyed all earthly passions and desires. It was the Light of *bhakti*, whereof these four mighty ones were the witness-bearers.

And all the four agreed in teaching that man must surrender his will to the Will Divine. They all taught that the Divine Will was the supreme Force that moved the earth and planets, the suns and stars of the Universe. And the secret of the true spiritual life, they urged, was to surrender self-will to the Will Divine. Guru Nanak said:—"Conform to *hukum*,"—the Will of God, the Divine Ordinance that sways systems and universes

*From a talk.

of the Infinite Cosmos. And St. Teresa said:—
 “Surrender thy will unto His Hands!”

All these four mighty teachers and revealers of God saw “visions” and heard voices, divine “locutions.” St. Teresa tells us in her great work,—one of the great “Autobiographies” in the literature of the spiritual life,—a book in no way inferior to St. Augustine’s *Confessions*,—St. Teresa says that, in her prayers, she saw Jesus by her side, again and again. St. Teresa had other visions, too, and heard voices speaking to her from another Realm. Of these I may tell a little some other day. And to Guru Nanak came the great vision in the waters. Bathing in the Ravi river, he saw and he heard what no human artist may depict in a picture and no human words may articulate aright. To Guru Nanak came from the Heart of Silence that is in the depths of waters, the Voice, saying:—“I have called thee to be a teacher of men. Go thou and proclaim to them the Word in this hour of the world’s distress and darkness. And never forget, Nanak, I am with thee always!” To St. Teresa, too, spake, again and again, the Voice which said:—“Go thou and bear witness to the law and life of Christ in this age of darkness, and never forget I am with thee always!”

Blessed among the sons and daughters of men are they who give heed to the message of these great ones:—“Empty thy spirit of all self and thou shalt walk in the Light Divine!” In this message is the hope, even today, of our broken, bleeding humanity!

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

By the Editor

CONTEMPLATION IN A WORLD OF ACTION,
by Thomas Merton. Allen & Unwin Ltd., London. £5.50.

Has the monastic life an answer to the problems and perplexities which confront modern youth? What is the call of the monastery to children of an excited, agitated age? Is joining a monastery trying to "escape" life? And by becoming a monk, does a man have to submit to meaningless rules and dogmas?

These and other questions have been frankly and courageously answered by Thomas Merton, who spent 27 years of his life in a Trappist monastery. A prolific writer and essayist of penetrating originality, author of the famous *The Waters of Silence*, *Seeds of Contemplation*, *The Wisdom of the Desert*, *Mystics and Zen Masters*, Merton was a brilliant scholar, a man of deep insight and breadth of vision.

The basis of life in ancient India was the Rishi's *ashrama* (monastery). Out of it emanated forces which made India a model state, a leader of the nations, a builder of civilisation. And the *ashrama* was situated far from the madding crowds of cities, in the lap of nature, where the future citizens, the "builders of tomorrow," were given a training in self-discipline and self-knowledge. Without such centres, India cannot hope to re-arise and take her rightful place in the comity of nations. Thomas Merton's book, though placed in a different setting, will help us to understand the significance and value of the *ashrama* life, which we so often criticise through sheer ignorance.

STRINGS FOR A BROKEN LUTE, by Mabel Telford. Psychic Press, Ltd., London. £1.75.

Mrs. Telford gives a description of the happy years she spent with her husband, who was a brilliant surgeon, until suddenly he was attacked by paralysis resulting in loss of speech. With great courage and patience, they set themselves to the difficult task of recovering communication, until finally Dr. Telford was called to higher life.

Very soon thereafter, with the help and assistance of the well-known medium, the late Eileen Garrett, Mrs. Telford received "messages" from her husband, which have been brought together in this book. What makes the book interesting is the fact that, even after giving up the body, Dr. Telford has memory of the strenuous efforts he made to recover his lost speech. It is as though there is no "break" between life on earth and the one that is to come after the "death" of the body. Concerning this life much is told us in the latter half of the book.

The "messages" recorded in the book contain sparks of wisdom. Here is one of them:—"Don't let yourself become dependent upon even those who love you, for they can't administer to your needs, when the final curtain descends. Let your self be governed by the fundamental reality of being, for that is where the support comes from." Dr. Telford had practised this while he was in the body, proving that we take with ourselves what we have woven into our being while here on earth.

THE WAY OF TRANSFORMATION : Daily Life as Spiritual Exercise, by Karlfried Graf von Durckheim. Trans. by Ruth Lewinnek and P. L. Travers. Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London. £2.50.

In this expensive book of 104 pages is given us a teaching which, if put into practise, would take a whole life-time.

Essentially, each one of us is divine. But our True Self is veiled within many veils. And no amount of study and practice of so-called religious teachings helps in the re-discovery of the Hidden Self. Very often such study and practice strengthen the ego which separates us from Reality. The unconscious needs to be cleansed, and it is necessary to "discard any element, spiritual or physical, that dams up the flow of our essential being. At the same time we must give entrance to and build upon all that is in harmony with this being." It is a difficult task this, to merge the secular in the spiritual, and it needs constant vigilance and awareness. It is like treading all the time what the Upanishad refers to as the "razor's edge." But it becomes easier if we let the Divine become our Teacher and Leader on the path of life.

We are asked to forsake everything and to follow the inner Light. This needs tremendous courage. For not everyone can tread the lonely path. Many of us need "crutches" and "supports." All "crutches" and "supports" are to be cast aside : nor must the seeker desire anything for himself. For "so long as a man tries to gain something solely for himself by this practice,—whether it be the acquisition of higher faculties, extraordinary experiences, tranquillity or harmony, even his own salvation," he is "bound to miss the Way."

BONE OF CONTENTION : LIFE STORY AND CONFESSIONS, by Cyril Scott. The Aquarian Press, London. £2.75.

A remarkable story of the life of a remarkable man. At the age of 90, Cyril Scott tells his story with characteristic humility which yet reveals a personality unique in its achievement both as musician and writer.

Born in a Christian family, Cyril Scott strayed to agnosticism, until in the first decade of the present century, he be-

came interested in yoga and survival after death. He became a Vedantist and, later, a Theosophist and Occultist.

Early in life, Cyril Scott became interested in naturopathy, the bio-chemic system of medicine, herbalism, osteopathy and homocopathy, and wrote his first therapeutical book during the thirties.

He was past forty when he had an interview with the invisible Master Koot Hoomi who suggested he should marry and also gave him the name of his would-be wife. Later, Cyril Scott received, by dictation, the book published under the title, *Music : Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages*.

VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES, by William James. Fontana, London. 50 p.

We welcome this paperback of a classic to which Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) referred, again and again, in his talks and private conversations.

Though these utterances of the great thinker and philosopher were made seventy years ago, they appear fresh today. Perhaps it is because human nature does not change that what William James spoke so many years ago continues to have relevance today.

It is a book which everyone will read with profit.

TO LIVE WITHIN, by Lizelle Reymond. Doubleday & Co., Inc., New York, \$ 6.95.

Miss Reymond spent a number of years in the Himalayas in fellowship with Sri Anirvan, a Guru whose teachings reflect the Samkhya Philosophy.

In this book, she describes her experiences at the feet of Sri Anirvan and also gives the latter's talks on Samkhya reproduced from notes taken down by her.

The book offers a portrait of a man and his teachings which is unique and yet integrated into the Indian religious tradition.

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